

**Consultants' Report on the Concept of and Framework  
for an International Environment Communication Centre  
for the IWOKRAMA Rain Forest Program**

**Consultants**

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## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

### A. THE TASK

At the request of the Interim Board of Trustees of the Iwokrama Rain Forest Program,<sup>1</sup> the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) made available the services of two consultants to assist in developing the framework for the establishment of an International Environmental Communications Centre (IECC)<sup>2</sup> as part of the Program. The starting point of the exercise was a series of general and tentative ideas about the possible purpose of such a Centre. The expected output was a document outlining a concept and a possible structure for the proposed Centre. The document was expected to contain recommendations which could inform decision-making about the IECC at the Third Meeting of the Interim Board, scheduled for London, England, early October, 1993. The consultants, Mrs. Barbara Gumbs and Mr. Frank Campbell, were asked to advise on the communications and information elements respectively and to work as co-operatively as circumstances of time and distance would permit. Their terms of reference appear at Attachment 'A'.

This is their report.<sup>3</sup> This first section seeks to document and clarify the original idea and to provide some general background information. Section II deals mainly with the communications aspects. Section III focuses on matters related to information.

That the leaders of the program have decided to pay attention, at this early stage of implementation, to the information and communication needs of the program is both commendable and fortunate. Any organization the size of Iwokrama will have communication problems. There are two ways to deal with such problems. The first is through "fire-fighting" - responding to crises as they arise, which is usually too late. The other is through planning, proactivity and prevention. Thankfully, in this case, the latter seems to be the approach selected.

### B. MISSIONS

Unfortunately, the two consultants needed to undertake separate missions. Mr. Campbell visited Guyana from Thursday, August 19, 1993 to Wednesday, September 2, 1993, and Mrs. Gumbs from Sunday, September 12 to Saturday, September 18, 1993. Both met with a range of groups and individuals who were helpful in the development of the ideas and recommendations contained in the report. Mr. Campbell also met a number of persons in

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<sup>1</sup> The spelling used in this report [particularly in sections I and II) is that generally used in Canada.

<sup>2</sup> As will be seen below, the name of the Centre is itself subject to final determination.

<sup>3</sup> This report represents an effort to combine into one two documents which were prepared separately. Thus, some inconsistency may be observed in style, terminology, etc.

Canada. With the help of Forestry Canada, he accompanied representatives of two Mexican model forest projects on a visit to the Eastern Ontario Model Forest. In Guyana, he was able to visit the program site and to hold consultations with members of three Amerindian communities located near to the site, those of Annai, Surama and Kurupukari.

The consultants' schedules of meetings appear as attachments 'B' and 'C' respectively. Between the time of the two missions, they had the opportunity of meeting in Ottawa for a brief consultation and exchange of ideas.

### C. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The consultants would like to acknowledge their debt to those groups and individuals who shared concerns, ideas and data with them and to all who contributed in any way to the success of their work. In particular, they would like to acknowledge the help and co-operation of Ms. Pat Thomipson, Senior Program Officer, Information Sciences and Systems Division, IDRC; and her secretary, Ms. Pascale Bruneau; Mr Navin Chandarpal, Chairman of the Guyana Inter-Agency Committee of Iwokrama, a member of the Board of Trustees and Adviser to the President of Guyana on Science, Technology and Environment; and Mr. E. Lance Carberry, Secretary to the Interim Board of Trustees and then Executive Vice-Chairman of the Guyana Natural Resources Agency, his secretary Ms. Nannette Christopher, and other members of the staff of GNRA.

### D. GUYANA

Although Iwokrama is an international program, it is based on Guyanese territory and is unlikely to escape totally the information and communication challenges which flow from that fact. A few brief words about Guyana's geographical, social, political and economic landscape might therefore be in order.

In many ways a strange country, Guyana is South American in terms of its physical geography but Caribbean in terms of its human and political geography. It is South America's only Commonwealth entity and houses the continent's only English-speaking nation. After centuries of exploitation, some four-fifths of its land mass is still covered by forests.

Africans and Indians comprise the overwhelming majority of the country's cosmopolitan population though other groups, including about ten major Amerindian tribes, retain social, economic or other significance. As will be shown, certain Amerindian interests are central to Iwokrama's communication challenges. Despite an increasing tendency towards miscegenation and some successful efforts to blunt ethnic voting, race continues to be functional in the country's political process.

However, as has been the case for many years, Guyana enjoys relative political stability. This is evidenced, for example, by the transition from one government to another following generally peaceful elections in October 1992 despite some dissatisfaction with the process expressed, ironically, by the party in power during those elections.

After many years of economic stagnation, Guyana finally started showing signs of economic recovery during the past three years or so. Recent efforts to restructure the economy have led to a new willingness by international aid donors to look favourably on Guyana's funding requests. The new government is pledged to continue those initiatives subject, of course, to its own policy emphases. The success of steps taken to resuscitate the rice, sugar and bauxite industries - the national economic mainstays - and to take advantage of the nation's considerable gold, forestry and other resources could produce considerable economic growth and have a positive impact on the situation in the rest of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM).

### E. IWOKRAMA

If a picture of the IECC would be incomplete without a reference to the reality of Guyana, it would be non-existent if not placed within the context of the Iwokrama Rain Forest Program (IRFP). The Iwokrama initiative was born four years ago when the then President, Mr. Desmond Hoyte, offered to his Commonwealth Colleagues in Malaysia in 1989 to reserve an area of his country's Amazonian rain forest for a pilot project under Commonwealth auspices. Subsequently, 360,000 hectares (900,000 acres) of virgin unexploited forest, located in an area including the Iwokrama Mountains, were set aside for the Program. In a number of documents, the primary objectives of the Program are given as:

- \* the development of methods and techniques for the sustainable utilization of tropical rain forest resources through pilot-scale research projects within a part of the site dedicated to this purpose; and
- \* the conservation of biodiversity/genetic resources through "the *in situ* conservation of the genetic resources contained in the virtual gene-bank represented by the area demarcated as the Amazonian Rain Forest Wilderness Reserve" which will permit research through bio-technology and other genetic approaches.

An indication of the importance attached to the proposed establishment of the IECC is the fact that more recent statements have included the information, education and communication elements as a separate and specific objective.

The Iwokrama program is not, and is unlikely to become, an integral part of the proposed Commonwealth Forestry Initiative, though, presumably, there would be links once both programs get off the ground. However, it responds to the principles enshrined in the Langkawi Declaration on Environment approved by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1989. It also responds to a number of key concerns arising from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Chairman of the Interim Board of Trustees, distinguished Indian scientist M. S. Swaminathan, has described the IRFP as one of the most exciting programs in the world today.

Until recently, the Program was going through a number of preliminary phases. Apart from the allocation of the land, there was the preparation of a report by a Commonwealth Expert

Group headed by Dr. Swaminathan. The Group recommended: the establishment of a wilderness preserve on a part of the Program site; the management of the remainder of the site on a sustainable basis to yield economic benefits to the people of Guyana; the establishment of an International Centre for Research and Training; and the establishment of a Communications Centre to promote environmental literacy and public education about the linkages between forests and the quality of life on earth. Preliminary funding totalling US\$3.0 million has been provided by the Global Environmental Facility, established as an offshoot of the UNCED process.

Pending the formalization of the necessary legislation and international accords, the affairs of Iwokrama are in the hands of an Interim Board of Trustees (IBOT), with both Guyanese and international representation. Until now, a counterpart local Inter-Agency Committee has been guiding local action with respect to the program, while actual execution has been undertaken mainly by officials of the GNRA. As the international staffing and decision-making structure comes into force, the Committee is expected to play an increasingly "hands off" role and to be concerned principally with the coordination of the Guyanese input into the decision-making process. At its first meeting, on 21 July 1992, the Interim Board identified four program areas for priority attention as follows:

- \* Bio-diversity and bio-future;
- \* Sustainable (ecological, economic and social) utilization of tropical rain forest resources;
- \* Ethno-biology and human ecology; and
- \* Human resource development (education and training), information and communications.

The program now seems to be approaching the implementation stage. Evidence of this includes:

- \* the selection of the site for the base camp and arrangements to begin work on a temporary base camp before year-end;
- \* the finalizing of arrangements to appoint a Logistics Manager; and
- \* arrangements to begin site surveys before year-end.

Further evidence is provided by the decisions to pursue immediately a number of research activities. These include a project aimed at studying Amerindian contributions to the conservation of biological diversity with particular reference to economic plants including those of medicinal value. This project will also help to organize Guyanese Amerindian communities into a co-operative network for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. A second project will study sustainable lifestyles among Amerindians and develop indicators of "sustainability" and "unsustainability". An archaeological survey is also to be undertaken shortly within the Program site.

Meanwhile, arrangements for establishing the legal framework for the Program seem to be approaching their final stages. The framework is expected to be established in part by legislation to be approved by the Parliament of Guyana. The other part of the legal framework will be an agreement between the Government of Guyana and the Commonwealth Secretariat, with provisions for Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries to become members by accession and for national, regional and international organizations or entities to be admitted as associate members.

When the Program structure is fully established, it will have two main elements. The first is the authority to be established under the proposed Iwokrama Rain Forest Program Site (Management) Authority Act. This authority will have responsibility for the management of the program site and will, for all practical purposes, be vested with the authority normally exercised by other bodies - the Forestry Commission, the Drainage and Irrigation Department, etc. - with respect to the area.

The second part of the structure will be the International Centre for Research and Training for Rain Forest Conservation and Development.<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of the Centre's work, the Program site will be divided into two sections. One will be demarcated as an Amazonian Rain Forest Wilderness Preserve. The other will be used to research and demonstrate the sustainable utilization of the multiple resources of the tropical rain forest. The work of the Centre will include conducting surveys and inventories of the flora and fauna within the Program site. It will also undertake ongoing pilot-scale research projects to develop methods and techniques for the sustainable utilization of rain forest resources in terms of timber, non-timber products, wild-life, mineral extraction, recreational space, pharmaceuticals, etc. It is as a part of this larger Centre that the International Environmental Communications Centre is expected to be developed and to carry out its activities.

#### **F. INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE (IECC)**

The idea of establishing the IECC seems to have originated in the Swaminathan Report. Since then, the idea went through a number of adjustments and the IECC's role was variously outlined in different statements and documents. As noted earlier, recent Iwokrama documents have added the communications element as one of three primary objectives of the overall program. For example, a recent speech by Mr. Carberry, the Secretary to the Board, identified this third objective as:

the dissemination of the methods and techniques for the sustainable utilization of multiple rain forest resources to audiences in Guyana, the Commonwealth and the international community generally.

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<sup>4</sup> In many places, this agency is referred to as the International Centre for Research and Training; for the sake of convenience, this is the form used in this report, particularly in the first two sections.

What about the objectives and role of the IECC as such? Up to the time the consultancy was established, the intended objectives seemed to be:

- the worldwide promotion of environmental literacy, through formal and non-formal means, at the public, professional and political levels;
- support - presumably of an information nature, first and foremost - for the research activities of the Program; and
- serving as a channel for the national and international dissemination of knowledge of the methods and techniques, for the sustainable utilization of tropical rain forest resources.

As explained above, the purpose of the consultancy was to help refine the concept and develop a framework for its implementation. It was clarified during discussions with the Iwokrama authorities that there would be no impropriety in treating the stated objectives, not as being fixed in concrete, but as a valuable starting point.

### G. SOME CLARIFICATIONS

The first few days of the Communications Consultant's visit to Guyana were dedicated to efforts aimed at clarifying a number of matters. These arose either from the proposed objectives, from the proposed name of the IECC or from material in which the Centre was mentioned.

The first related to the IECC's stated education and training role. While in some places this appeared to relate specifically to "the spread of environmental literacy", in other places a more all-encompassing role seemed to be indicated. To the extent that a Program like Iwokrama might, for example, conduct or sponsor postgraduate training in biodiversity or sustainable development, a communications centre seemed the inappropriate unit to locate responsibility for such training. Through discussion, it was clarified that IECC's role in this kind of formal academic training would be limited mainly to the development and production of the resources or material needed to facilitate that training.

The second question related to the sense in which the IECC would be "international". Was it international only in the sense that the outreach of its dissemination function extended beyond the shores of Guyana? Or also in the sense that it would become a centre of excellence in the communication of environmental matters and thus transcend its role - without, of course, losing the identity - as a unit of a specific research program, i.e. Iwokrama. No definitive approach emerged from these preliminary discussions and this issue will therefore be addressed further in Section II.

There was also some concern whether the term environment was not too wide to characterize the role of the IECC. Could a Program dedicated to research results specifically related to rain forests realistically spawn a communications centre dealing with wider environmental questions. Would not such a centre in fact be exceeding the mandate available

to the parent body under national law and international agreement? It was agreed that the narrower definition was the appropriate one, that the IECC would be "environmental" no more or less than Iwokrama was.

The next question, raised by at least one member of the Guyana Inter-Agency Committee, related to the feasibility of subsuming Iwokrama's information support role within the ambit of the IECC. The major concern seemed to be whether the IECC could generate the large sums needed for the information hardware, software and accommodation required to support a major research undertaking and, possibly, a postgraduate outfit as well. On balance, it was considered that there was a sufficiency of experience of communications and information functions being carried out efficiently under the same umbrella. [This question is further clarified in Section III.]

The fifth question, linked to all the previous ones, had to do with the name of the Centre. Apparently, some confusion was already being generated by the idea of one body described as an international centre (IECC) comprising a unit within another body similarly described (the International Centre for Research, Training and Communication). A consensus is emerging that "International Environmental Communications Centre" is not an appropriate name for the proposed entity. The discussions have so far not produced a consensus on a new name. However, the general feeling seems to be that the name should reflect, as closely as possible, the proposed functions of the Centre. Some of the considerations and proposals so far presented are listed in attachment 'D'. For the time being, this report continues to use the name originally proposed.



## SECTION II: EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

### A. IS THERE A NEED FOR THE IECC?

In Section I above, we established a case for provisions to be made for a communications function, in the general "public relations" or "public affairs" sense, within the Iwokrama structure. Such a function would not require the establishment of an information and communications centre at the level clearly envisaged for the IECC. A good "P.R." department would suffice. The justification for the establishment of an entity at the level of IECC, with its implied role as both an educator and a communicator, really turns on two questions. First: is there a sufficient need for such a Centre or, in other words, what kind of impact is it likely to make? Second: what is its potential scope - or is its work likely to exhibit sufficient breadth and depth to make its establishment worthwhile? Let us examine these two questions in turn.

#### I. Potential Impact

##### a. Local

The available evidence suggests that IECC could make a meaningful impact at the national, regional and international levels. Research undertaken for the preparation of the National Forestry Action Plan found that, "Presently, there is a lack of appreciation of the environment by the Guyanese public."<sup>5</sup> This is a critical lack, at this point in world environmental history, in a country that depends on its natural-resource base, for growth and development. The IRFP, in association with other agencies and programs in the country, could make a valuable contribution in the promotion of environmental literacy in Guyana and in transmitting environmental knowledge from one section of the society to another. Such an effort could help lay the groundwork for the other role which IRFP, and therefore IECC, must play - ensuring that relevant groups within the society receive, understand, appreciate and, where appropriate, apply the knowledge generated by the Program.

##### b. Regional

For years, the Caribbean Community Secretariat has recognized the need to establish a strong environmental program as part of its work in the area of functional cooperation among Member States. The results of UNCED could only strengthen this need and this recognition.

There are at least two specific reasons why the particular output of a program like Iwokrama would be of interest to Commonwealth Caribbean countries. The first is that many of them have sought in recent years to strengthen their forestry programs. In Saint Lucia, a CIDA project has virtually re-created the Forestry Department, increasing it from a staff of

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<sup>5</sup> Guyana Natural Resources Agency, **National Forestry Action Plan 1990-2000**; prepared under the coordination of Guyana Forestry Commission and Canadian International Development Agency, Kingston, Georgetown, Guyana, 1989, p. 64.

couple persons to almost 40, many of them trained in and out of the country. A similar project is being implemented in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Last year, CIDA started a seven-year project in Jamaica to help rebuild the industry following the ravages of Hurricane Gilbert and to improve the functioning of the Forestry Department. Projects have also been developed, though not yet funded, in Dominica and in Antigua and Barbuda. The importance of public education has been acknowledged in the development of at least some of these projects. Possibilities for linkage between these educational efforts and the anticipated work of the IECC could be interesting.

The second point has to do with the importance of rain forests in mitigating the impact of climate change. Scientific predictions of climate change, with their implications for sea-level rise, have produced considerable concern in small island-developing countries (IDCs) such as are scattered throughout the Caribbean Sea. Since climate change is one of the areas likely to be covered under the work done at Iwokrama, the importance for the Region of information emanating from the Program could be, literally, a matter of life-or-death.

c. International

The UNCED debate led to a series of compromises favouring a development paradigm which addresses both biodiversity (the prime concern in most parts of the North) and sustainable development (a major requirement in the South and in such Northern countries as Canada). However, the world lacks the knowledge required to give practical meaning to these concepts. Thus, the Iwokrama Program is potentially one of great benefit to Guyana, the rest of the Amazonian region, other rain forest countries in and out of the Commonwealth, and, ultimately, the entire international community.

Existing programs of this type appear not to have developed the information and communication area as one of major emphasis. Information work in at least one Amazonian biodiversity program seems confined to returning biodiversity information to the countries of origin and information exchange among the countries in the Amazonian region.<sup>6</sup> As will be seen below when we deal with the concepts of excellence and linkage, one international model forest network may be willing to promote IECC's role in the information and communication areas. There seems little doubt, therefore, that there is a role at the international level, as well, for a Centre of the kind envisaged.

2. Scope

a. Subject Matter

A program of rain forest research, conservation and sustainable utilization could potentially produce a rich and varied harvest of knowledge and other products. Summarizing the wide spectrum of ideas developed by authors on the assets which tropical rain forests

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<sup>6</sup> See project material on project on Sustainable Development of Amazonian Biodiversity.

represent to the world, Marius Jacobs<sup>7</sup> listed 12 such assets. These are: supply of wood, retention of soil, regulation of run-off, stabilization of climate, source of minor forest products, pool of new useful plant species, pool of genetic material useful in other ways, home and food source of animals, and of hunting-gathering tribes, matrix of evolution, source of knowledge, object of respect for the creation and medium for education and recreation. Although the details of the Program's research agenda will not be known for some time, it has been noted that Iwokrama will deal with the following key UNCED concerns):

- \* the sustainable utilization of tropical rain forest resources;
- \* bio-diversity and bio-technology;
- \* conservation;
- \* climate change;
- \* environmental education and training; and
- \* the involvement of indigenous and local people.

Clearly, then, the subjects to be dealt with by the Program, and therefore by IECC, represent a range of matters of significant interest to the nation, the region and the world at the present time. This significance would increase further if the Program succeeded in establishing links with other similar Programs, especially those involving forests with different sets of human, botanical and zoological populations.

b. Potential Audience

The question of audience is discussed rather fully below. Suffice it to say, at this point, that the range of audiences likely to be addressed by the proposed Centre is extremely wide. For the Centre and the Program itself to be effective, they must address groups varying from children to scientists, from Amerindian communities to the international donor community, from local NGOs to the international media, from foresters to heads of states, from Guyanese and Brazilians to Canadians and Filipinos.

## B. COMMUNICATIONS: A HOLISTIC APPROACH

In some senses, the original objectives of the IECC were, at one and the same time, too inclusive and too exclusive. The larger educational role implied by some of the documents seemed misplaced. On the other hand, even the basic public relations/public affairs role incumbent on virtually all organizations was not specifically mentioned. After the preliminary review described in the last part of Section I had been conducted, the true role of IECC seems to be three-fold - information, education and communication. First, we deal with the communications role.

There are communications challenges to be met. And there are audiences to be persuaded and educated - ranging from the Amerindian community and the general public in

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<sup>7</sup> Marius Jacobs, *The Tropical Rain Forest: A First Encounter*, Remke Kruk, et. al., eds. (Berlin, New York, etc.: Springer-Verlag), 1981, p. 197.

Guyana to the donor and scientific communities internationally. There are many possible ways to fulfil that communications function. One could, for example, merely concentrate on the normal public relations role and add a program for the dissemination of research results. But any such approach would represent an opportunity misspent.

The nature of the Iwokrama Program is consistent with a communications strategy that focuses on involving people rather than on merely proselytizing them. The approach recommended here is one in which the communication process begins not with the dissemination of research results but with consultation with relevant "publics" about the research agenda - indeed about the development of the Iwokrama program in general. This approach does not recommend itself merely by its intrinsic worth; discussions held by the Communications Consultant, with representatives of the NGO and Amerindian communities for example, clearly indicate that the traditional approach, with its reliance on mass media and its heavy emphasis on persuasion and the outward movement of information and ideas, could be dysfunctional.<sup>8</sup>

#### Development Support Communication (DSC)

We recommend an approach similar to that described as development support communication (DSC). DSC was tried with some success in the 1970s in a number of Asian countries and, notably, on the Upper Mazaruni Hydroelectric Project in Guyana itself. It was all but abandoned for a number of reasons - lack of funds, the ascendancy of the market approach, the de-emphasis of integrated rural development. With the development community once again exploring participatory communications approaches - beneficiary participation at the World Bank, an emphasis on NGOs in communications tasks at UNFPA, a brand new development communications sub-program at IDRC - Iwokrama is well placed to be as innovative in its communications approach as in its overall program content.

What, then, is DSC? Stripped of all technicality, DSC involves people not as mere recipients of information but as active partners at all stages of the planning and implementation of a program or project. It is different from public information approaches in a number of ways. The first differences are that DSC starts earlier in the process and involves a wider range of groups. It does not seek solely to publicize a project. It brings together planners, implementers, potential beneficiaries and even potential victims from the very early stage when the nature of the project is being determined.

Another aspect of DSC is the range and definition of media. Whereas the traditional approach tends to assume, and overplay, the importance of mass media, DSC discusses, evaluates and uses a wider range of media. Things like cultural activities, face-to-face get-togethers and kept promises are the kind of communication media not normally encompassed in traditional "PR" strategies but potentially important in DSC. One of the main justifications for

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<sup>8</sup> One personage epitomized these emphases and the attendant problems when, responding to clamours for more communication on Iwokrama, he emphasized that the Program had been well publicized since it had been on radio and television.

recommending the DSC methodology is its similarity to some of the research approaches inherent in the overall Program, starting with the first two projects being implemented. It should be stressed that the use or non-use of the term DSC to describe the Iwokrama approach is not essential. What is important is to establish a continuity between what Dr. Swaminathan calls the two-way approach to research, on the one hand, and the Program's communication function, on the other.

The DSC approach has two immediate implications. One is the necessary emphasis on two-way communication. The term is used here to mean genuine two-way involvement. It does not merely cover the feedback mechanism through which official and corporate communicators seek to ensure that their message has got through, important though such feedback is.

The second offshoot is the importance of research. In the case of Iwokrama, three levels of communication research will be vital. There will be need for surveys, focus groups, etc. as part of the feedback and evaluation functions. A higher level of research would be needed, for example, to ascertain the relevant publics, to discover the concerns and the potential contributions of those publics and to learn what media and systems are functional within particular groups. The third could be equated in some ways with the rest of the Iwokrama research program. This would comprise studies of a higher scientific level concerned, for example, with techniques to increase environmental literacy, particularly with respect to the conservation and sustainable utilization of rain forests, or with the inter-generational transmission of skills and ideas in indigenous communities.

### C. COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

The time spent on mission in Guyana could not substitute for the kind of solid research and consultation which alone could provide the basis for an Iwokrama communications/development support manager to construct an effective program of activities. However, it did serve to indicate some of the communication challenges which Iwokrama needs to address and some of the communications effects which it should pursue. Some of these will now be examined from the point of view of different audiences.

#### 1. The Amerindian Community

There are at least three Amerindian communities residing near to the Program site and much of what happens at Iwokrama is of concern to them. Some of it is also of interest to Amerindian groups countrywide. At least five strategic concerns could be isolated:

- a. Although no part of the Program site falls within Amerindian territory, the site contains areas traditionally used by Amerindians for hunting, fishing and other purposes for at least a part of the year. The undertaking to respect these rights, which is written into the draft legislation, needs both to be respected and, until established by practice, to be communicated otherwise, in a credible and effective manner.
- b. The Amerindians have been, in the words of the Minister of Amerindian Affairs,

the "gardeners of the forest" and therefore the custodians of much of the knowledge being sought by Iwokrama. This has implications in terms of the location of that knowledge (the question of whether the inter-generational transmission of values and wisdom has been interrupted in contemporary times); the willingness to transmit it to persons outside the community; and the yet unsettled international issue of intellectual property as it relates to local and indigenous wisdom. At least some of these matters, particularly the latter, are being addressed by the relevant authorities.

- c. There is some fear - apparently not common to all members of the community and not voiced by all who share it - that the Program would encroach upon their land rights. This needs to be dealt with sensitively, seriously and expeditiously as a domestic issue and perhaps anticipated as a potential international one.

- d. A fear exists of invasion by "foreigners" - meaning both non-Amerindian Guyanese and international experts - and of possible implications with respect to health, mores and the possible loss of young village women, through marriage for example. Again, this fear is not universal. Indeed, there is much ambivalence, some younger members of the communities believing that exactly this kind of expansion in activity and population is needed to breathe new life into the areas.

- e. There is a strong interest in the benefits which the Program is likely to bring to the communities. These range from the intellectual (the codification of indigenous prudence for the benefit of present and future generations) to the economic (jobs, better infrastructure, etc.). However, once again there is ambivalence: a tension between the desire to be left alone and the felt need to benefit from developments in the rest of the society, a tension and an ambivalence which extends beyond the confines of Amerindian villages into the wider international community.

All of these concerns could be addressed, given the correct strategy. However, without going into too many details, I must stress that here is an example of the dysfunctionality of national mass media. Radios in the communities visited seem to receive signals from everywhere except Guyana; a newspaper is a rarity; television sets are practically non-existent as is electricity. Visits, usually an important source of communication with officialdom, have hardly been received in recent times, except from representatives of the Iwokrama Program itself. Members of one community suggested that an important way of keeping in touch with them would be taking part in sports after church on Sunday mornings.

While convinced that the desired relationship can be developed with the three communities visited, we were unable to form an opinion with respect to other Amerindian communities and, more importantly, Amerindian groups operating in Georgetown. Indications are that the latter have different concerns and attitudes and are accessible through different media and approaches.

## 2. The General Guyanese Population

One might dramatize the importance of this group by pointing to the potential impact on fund-raising, research and virtually all aspects of the Program if there were to be a series of well-publicized public demonstrations against Iwokrama on the streets of Georgetown. Thankfully, this is a highly unlikely scenario. Our guess would be that many Guyanese support the Program and that most others operate at the levels of apathy or ignorance. There is probably little strong opposition, though there are obviously examples of skepticism. However, a sleeping giant is still a giant. Thus a carefully conceived program of local public information is, and will continue to be, necessary. This should take place at two levels of intensity: one using mainly mass media and aimed at the general public; another using face-to-face activities (which have started but which need to be more structured and intensive) to reach groups which have special interests and which could therefore have special impact, either positive or negative. Local support - not opposition and not indifference - is the only communications environment in which Iwokrama will truly be able to flourish. The issues which need to be addressed in any local campaign include:

- a. Complaints that the nation was not adequately consulted prior to the decision and action with respect to the gift of a significant piece of national territory;
- b. Concerns over the exercise of sovereignty and jurisdiction with respect to the Program site;
- c. Whether the harvest of research knowledge would be sufficiently relevant and timely to contribute to the sustainable utilization of Guyana's forests before it is too late;
- d. Generally, safeguarding the interests of Guyanese and ensuring that they benefit from the Program;
- e. Consulting with and protecting the interests of, Amerindians;
- f. Adequate information flows and dealing with the perception in some quarters - despite a number of public events and opportunities - of a shroud of secrecy.

In addition to a public information campaign - which is an immediate need - the local public will be obvious beneficiaries of the efforts to increase environmental literacy, especially with respect to the matters covered by the Program.

## 3. Local Environmental NGOs

There are two potentially influential ENGOS. One initially responded to the Program with misgivings - including those at (2) above. In the case of the other, some of the leaders were officials of the former government and played major roles in Iwokrama's original

conceptualization. Both seem poised to play a dual role of supporter of the Program and guardian of the national interest. Which role predominates will largely be a matter of whether some of the concerns at (2) above, in particular the last three, are adequately addressed. To get the maximum value from this relationship, the Program should consider taking advantage of the considerable talent and experience residing within these two groups.

#### 4. International NGOs and the International Media

Time did not allow for a survey of the international NGOs, including ENGOs, likely to be interested in the subject or of their likely attitudes. What is obvious is that positions taken by such NGOs can reverberate in the halls of the international media, of donor organizations and of academia. One likely concern is the involvement of Amerindians in the decision-making process and the protection of their legal and other interests. The same considerations apply, *mutatis mutandis*, in the case of the media. Of course, the media are both the main source of their own power and a conduit for the potential impact of NGOs.

#### 5. Local Scientific Community

Steps have already been taken to assure members of the local scientific community that they would neither be excluded from Iwokrama's research activities nor treated as mere technical assistants to foreign scientists. However, these concerns - including questions of pay equity - have not by any means been fully laid to rest and therefore require continued attention.

#### 6. Staff

One audience taken for granted in most communication strategies is the staff of the organization concerned. This is not a luxury Iwokrama can afford. Staff members would be central - often as victims - to many of the privations, uncertainties, sensitivities and controversies which a Program like this could generate. Efforts will be needed to keep them fully informed and appropriately oriented and to keep track of their concerns without either the appearance or reality of managerial espionage.

#### 7. Industry

The forestry industry, both in Guyana and in other rain forest countries, represents potential beneficiaries and, consequently, an important audience. We are only equipped, at present, to make comments about the local industry. It is perhaps worthwhile pausing to evaluate some of the strategic concerns relating to this important sector of the Guyanese population:

- a. The industry's attitude towards Iwokrama at present is lukewarm, one of aloofness - in the words of one industry leader "They're doing their thing, leave us alone to do our thing". To some extent, this is a hangover of the perception that foreign scientists come to Guyana with no appreciation for what has been done so far but with a critical stance toward the industry.



- b. If, however, there is a scientific breakthrough - and the Program proves its value to the industry's bottom line - or if an anticipation of such a breakthrough could be generated, there is likely to be more positive interest. Even here, though, there is the caveat that a vine or nut proven by research to be valuable could then have its DNA copied in a northern laboratory and its value to the local industry accordingly reduced.
- c. The format in which research results are made available is crucial. A forester requires not an impressive shelf full of computer printouts but a set of meaningful tables that could fit into his or her pocket.
- d. There is some concern, based on internationally generated data about the cost of practising strict sustainability in the forestry sector, that the local industry would not be able to sustain those costs and that the knowledge produced by the Program might prove unfeasible in the real world of dollars and cents.
- e. An important and potentially difficult situation is the pressures which have been put on the local industry by NGOs and media overseas. There is the fear that even truth cannot stand up to the power of the foreign media or the attraction of an easily organized demonstration in favour of a presumably endangered tree, plant or animal. On the one hand, this makes Iwokrama attractive as evidence to the outside world that Guyana is taking environmental concerns seriously. From Iwokrama's point of view, on the other hand, there is the danger that controversies such as those attending the privately held Barama forestry concession, if not successfully handled, could have a contingent and negative impact on the Program's international image.

The need to encourage the people in this industry to feel that they are partners in the Iwokrama enterprise cannot be over-emphasized. It is also worth stressing, if only as footnote, that Iwokrama is not a forestry project and that the knowledge it generates is likely to be of interest to industries other than the forest industry. The mining, pharmaceutical, food, tourism and handicraft sectors are some that come to mind. The fact that the Program relates to a multiplicity of renewable and non-renewable resources is one that must be taken into account in any education and public information program.

## 8. Aid Donors

In its early stages, the Program will depend on the international donor community entirely - and even in its later stages, substantially - for financial resources. This fact generates its own agenda of communication concerns. These concerns include: the need neither to compete, nor to be seen to be competing, with Guyana for the same resources; the need to demonstrate the sustained value and vibrancy of the program; and the importance of avoiding the kind of political controversies - with respect to the Amerindian community, for example - which could compromise the aid donors' relations with their significant constituencies.

The perception that Guyana was tying up scarce human resources in the development and promotion of Iwokrama, to the neglect of its own National Forestry Action Plan, seemed, at one stage, to be colouring the willingness of some Canadian officials to develop interest in the former or to sustain their interest in the latter. However, evidence that the international structure is taking over real day-to-day responsibility and that Guyana is gearing up to be a beneficiary rather than a victim of the Program is likely to diffuse those concerns. What subsists, however, is the need to develop programs to keep aid donors honestly and accurately informed, genuinely interested and firmly persuaded.

#### 9. Local Political Opposition

Because the main party now in Opposition still retains some pride at having initiated the program, there is little likelihood of any obstacles from that source. In this regard, the debate in Parliament on the legislation to establish the Program formally will be crucial but hardly problematic. Nonetheless, rather than taking Opposition support or acquiescence for granted, the Program should devise sensitive and effective ways to keep all parliamentary parties informed of relevant developments without endangering relations with the Government.

#### 10. The Government

Relations, and therefore communications, with the Government will be important but, as with the main Opposition party, are unlikely to be problematic. For one thing, the proposed structure provides a number of continuing channels for such communication. What needs to be remembered is the similarity between communication and the weather. Leave your umbrella at home and the probability of precipitation immediately increases.

However, communicating with the Government is more than a matter of staying on good terms with one's host. The Government, through such agencies as the Guyana Natural Resources Agency (which encompasses the Guyana Forestry Commission) will, hopefully, be a major consumer of the Program's output of research results.

### D. PUBLIC EDUCATION/ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY

Iwokrama's primary purpose is the production of knowledge for the benefit of humankind. For this purpose to be served, such knowledge must be available for consumption by the scientific community, industry, policy-makers, advocacy groups and, in general, interested people in different countries. Special attention must be paid to students - from graduates, under-graduates and senior secondary students about to enter the sectors mentioned above to members of the kindergarten community, seedlings for a new crop of leaders and scholars.

The establishment of this consultancy evidences the authorities' recognition of the necessity to package the information for dissemination as part of carefully developed public information and public education activities. Until now, we have been focussing on communication steps required to make the Centre's work of producing knowledge possible, meaningful and optimal. In this section, we look at some of the things IECC can do to ensure

that the knowledge, once generated, is disseminated in a fruitful manner. We do this from the perspective of message (or the raw material), audience and media. First, however, a word about effectiveness.

1. Effectiveness

At no point should the IECC staff be content to evaluate their educational work by the quantity, or even the quality, of their output, important though these are. The true measure, to the extent that this could be determined, will always be the use to which the material is put. Obviously, that measure would vary from one user group to another. What a primary school child in Malaysia does with an Iwokrama comic book may be different - at least in the short term - from what a Guyanese forester does with a set of tables or a new forest safety kit. But the point is that feedback and evaluation must remain a constant in the Centre's operations.

2. Material

One of the challenges a planner would have in developing an educational program for Iwokrama is that the output of a program such as this is unknown and unknowable. Both the kind and volume of output are likely to change over time, perhaps starting with a small number of inventories and growing eventually - who knows! - to high levels of scientific theory. The range of outputs will probably encompass:

- \* inventories specific to the area being studied (an area about which more will likely be known, in the near future than about any other part of the Guyanese rain forest);
- \* data of a more general nature about the content, nature, use and protection of rain forests;
- \* research methodologies;
- \* communication and training techniques;
- \* scientific theory.

Two other things can be anticipated about the knowledge output. Much of it would be tentative. (This relates to the issue of whether the first decade, or even the first century, of Iwokrama's efforts would be non-productive of material of any value in the sustainable utilization of rain forests or whether advantage could be taken of the "state of the art" at various stages of the research). The other is that much of it is likely to be controversial. (Is the rain forest truly so fragile and non-recuperative, as Marius Jacobs believes, and therefore best left alone? Or is it more robust than we give it credit for and therefore truly amenable to careful, selective, sustainable utilization, which has tended to be the FAO position, at least in past years?)

3. Audience

Much has been said about this aspect already. It only needs to be stressed that:

- \* sometimes different material would be of interest to different audiences;
- \* it will often be possible and important to package the same material in different forms, formats and levels of technicality for say, scientists, students, the general public, laypersons and decision-makers;
- \* the IECC staff, as part of its planning activities, would need to refine, re-define and up-date its list of audiences and identify the best ways to group them for dissemination purposes.

4. Media

Many of the media identified for public-relations-type activities are the same being proposed for educational and dissemination activities, though the way they are used will often be different. These media are presented in eight categories, not necessarily in order of preference:

a. Print media

These might include:

- \* academic books and articles, prepared mainly by researchers with IECC's role being the editing, arranging for peer review, actual production and circulation;
- \* an academic journal, to be decided upon following a review of existing journals on the subject and to be developed and produced in collaboration with local, regional and other universities, research institutions and rain forest programs (as an alternative or in addition to close collaboration with existing journals);
- \* popular books and newspaper and magazine articles;
- \* text books, comic books, colouring books and other publications for university students, children and neo-literates;
- \* teaching manuals and teaching aids.

b. Electronic Media

This would involve the production of material for science and general programs on radio and television as well as the production of automated sound/slide programs.

c. Interpersonal Communication

Education could be promoted through such interpersonal channels as public speeches and lectures (preferably in combination with slides, videotapes or other aids); and conferences, seminars and workshops (aimed at different audiences - from academics to children).

d. Field Trips, Tours and Tourism

Two related forms of interpersonal communication worthy of special mention are field trips and eco-tours. The two are not significantly different except that the former may be thought of in relation to academics, students, scout groups, etc. and the latter in relation to more general audiences - local and foreign tourists. This is an area in which Canada has considerable experience.

Some start has been made in Guyana itself. A number of factors will have to be considered, including the cost of travelling from the Guyanese coastland (a problem not applicable in the case of neighbouring Amerindian populations); safety measures (animals, poisonous plants, falling trees, etc.); the need for trails (and the fears that these could lend themselves to misuse); staffing (botanists, etc.); and security, particularly in terms of possible insults to the ecology. Also needing special investigation are the special difficulties attending tours in close-canopy forests - including the problem of visibility.

On the one hand, this could be a costly exercise. On the other, if some of the foregoing problems could be addressed, eco-tours could serve a double purpose: expanding environmental literacy and earning resources for the Program. One option worth considering is the development of the eco-tours in collaboration with the Guyanese private sector.

e. Exhibits and Portable Displays

Especially given the financial and other challenges involved in getting to Iwokrama, IECC would need to find ways of taking Iwokrama to the people. There is therefore a role for mobile and stationary exhibits (botanical, photographic, food, handicraft, clothing, etc.). Iwokrama should seek to benefit from Canadian experience in building large-scale interactive computer models of "best" forest management practices and to adapt this experience to the particular attributes of Iwokrama.

f. School

For a number of years, the Canadian Forestry Department has used so-called "Interpretation Centres" as an important public-education tool. These centres are a kind of school where groups - composed mainly, but not necessarily of students - come to receive information about the forests. This approach could be effectively and usefully adopted and adapted by Iwokrama, permitting the employment of many of the other media and techniques proposed here. The question is whether such a school or centre should be placed at Iwokrama or somewhere on the coastland. Given some of the circumstances discussed above, we think both. The one at Iwokrama would constitute the ideal, if only in the sense that the real

"school", the rain forest, would be located just outside its walls, and would be available to members of the Amerindian communities and those who are able to visit the site. The one on the coast, perhaps located on the University of Guyana Campus at Turkeyen, would depend on exhibits, photographs, videos, etc. to represent a useful substitute for real rain forest conditions.

g. Teacher Training

Since IECC will not be able to reach directly each child in Guyana, not to mention those in other countries, a useful technique could be providing teachers with the necessary training, knowledge and material, including teaching manuals (see (a) above), so that they, in turn, could transmit correct and appropriate information and ideas to their students.

h. Other Media

A range of other media should also be employed. These could include special events, art and photography competitions, cultural displays (of Amerindian and practices, for example), postcards and souvenirs. Special activities could be developed around the interests of plant and animal lovers.

### E. PUBLIC IMAGE AND PUBLIC PROFILE

One factor underlying and affecting many of the information, communication and education activities of the Iwokrama Program would be the Program's public image. While the image an organization develops is partly a function of external forces and unanticipated developments, there is always a role for proactivity. This needs to be treated both as a communications and a general management issue. Therefore, without seeking to identify with precision or certitude what the desired profile would be, we wish to point to the need for the head of the IECC and the rest of the Iwokrama to give early consideration to this matter.

Either a profile that is too low or one that is unduly outlandish could be dysfunctional. And an image of efficiency, courtesy, caring, class or excellence generally comes about through choice and action rather than chance and accident. These and other attributes, if considered valuable to the organization, should be determined early enough to form part of its staff training and orientation, telephone-answering culture and stationery design.

An important factor in all this is the Program logo. Selecting the logo on the basis of a national or international competition could itself be a useful and early public-relations activity.

### F. LINKAGES AND A MATTER OF EXCELLENCE

We noted above that IRFP needed to decide whether the role of IECC was to be tied fully to the work of the Program or whether the former entity should see itself as a centre of excellence on rain forest information, education and communication in general. The distinction is significant. It would decide, for example, whether the output of other rain forest research programs was important in the work of IECC, beyond serving as reference material in the production of media resources; or whether the research results put out by Iwokrama represented

the totality of the IECC raw material. We believe that the International Board of Trustees should at least cause to be examined, a little more definitively than has been possible during this effort, whether there is not indeed a wider international role for IECC than that defined by the existence of a part of its audience outside the borders of the Program's host country. We believe that there is. Two points need to be made, however. One is the importance of ensuring that an international role for IECC does not undercut the importance of the Centre's role in providing information and communication support for the Program. The other is the existence of evidence, on the basis of solid international experience, that an organization which constitutes either a centre of excellence, or the host of an international network, benefits in many ways in terms of increased capacity to meet its own local needs. X

Whatever the decision on the foregoing question, linkage, both inside and outside of Guyana, would be an important part of the task of IECC and of the Program generally.

Already, IRFP documents indicate that the Iwokrama Rain Forest Program will function, at the day-to-day level, through formal and non-formal linkages with:

- a. institutions in Guyana;
- b. institutions in the Commonwealth Caribbean;
- c. institutions in the Commonwealth as a whole;
- d. institutions in the Amazon Basin
- e. international institutions;
- f. private- and public-sector industry in Guyana, within the Commonwealth and internationally.

This is a fairly general picture. In terms of Iwokrama's communication and educational work, among the local linkages required for education and communication purposes are those with

- a. the Guyana Agency for Health Sciences Education, Environment and Food Policy (GAHEF);
- b. the Ministry of Education;
- c. non-governmental organizations;
- d. the Guyana Forestry Commission;
- e. the Forest Products Association;
- f. the University of Guyana.

At the international level, two kinds of linkages will be particularly important:

\* Information, Educational and Communication Agencies: There are a number of agencies possessing media and other resources which could facilitate the work of IRFP and which, in turn, would appreciate receiving material put out by the Program. One such agency, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, has explicitly expressed an interest in working with IECC in a number of ways including assisting "in the international dissemination of knowledge arising from the Communications Centre".

\* Research and Other Bodies with Similar Objectives: Examples of these would include the Amazonian biodiversity project based in Brazil. One particularly interesting linkage could be with the International Model Forests Program, a network being established with Canada as the hub. So far, Canada has established 10 model forests within its own

territory; is supporting financially the establishment of one, and collaborating in the establishment of another, model rain forest in Mexico; is about to do the same in Malaysia; and plans to support a model forest in the Soviet Union as well.

These Canadian and foreign model forests, which have objectives akin to those of Iwokrama, will comprise the earliest members of the network. There were some informal indications that Canada would welcome an Iwokrama initiative to become part of the network and would support the idea of the IECC taking the lead role in the network's communication activities. We are pleased that Dr. Dave Brand, the head of the Canadian Model Forest Program, has been invited to the open session at the forthcoming meeting of the Interim Board of Trustees. We understand that, should a decision be taken to link Iwokrama with the network, the Government of Canada might be willing to provide a reasonable sum each year to help underwrite the Program's participation in the network.

Whether or not Iwokrama becomes a fully fledged member of the network is obviously a decision the Board would want to weigh carefully, having regard to the obligations of such membership, including any implications for Iwokrama's unique features. However, we feel confident that the Board would want to consider some form of ongoing relations with the network and that moral and material support for IECC as an international centre of excellence would not necessarily depend entirely on a decision regarding membership.

## H. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

We are about to get into the "nitty gritty" of structure, budgeting, accommodation and plan of action. First, however, let us pause to look at a miscellany of matters. Though important, these either have not been dealt with under any of the foregoing headings, or appear to require somewhat more detailed treatment.

### 1. The Intellectual Property Issue

The issue of intellectual property is one which the leaders of an undertaking like IRFP cannot escape. The issue has already been mentioned above with respect to Amerindian communities. It is one with which the international community is trying to deal, particularly with regard to UNCED positions on local and indigenous knowledge on biodiversity. Guyanese groups and individuals, in and out of Government, have been seeking to grapple with this matter.<sup>9</sup>

However, the discussions have not been able to deal, for example, with the dilemma posed by the responsibility of indigenous groups to help generate knowledge about sustainability and the lack of a system for compensating them; or that resulting from the question of who owns

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Rashleigh Jackson, "Biodiversity: Use and Control for Whom?", *CARICOM Perspective*, July-December, 1992, p. 61.



the product which originated as indigenous knowledge but which required major inputs by outside researchers and developers. And what value is placed on the knowledge of an indigenous person if, at the point at which it is communicated to a researcher, neither knows what will result from the cross-fertilization? Another aspect of the problem is finding a way to benefit not only the individual but also the community and the entire nation.

A discussion at which the Communications Consultant was present, involving members of the Guyana Inter-Agency Committee of Iwokrama and representatives of the private and NGO sectors, generated a number of interesting perceptions. Iwokrama, by the way it handles this matter, might well produce important ideas and communications approaches worthy of replication in other situations. A key element would be the Program's willingness and ability to engage in open dialogue with relevant groups and to demonstrate a spirit of fairness in its dealings.

## 2. Legal Instruments

Another challenge facing the midwives of the Iwokrama child is how to reconcile the seeming finality of legal instruments with the evolutionary character of a newly emerging organization. This point is relevant to this report for two reasons. The first is the way IECC, by whatever name finally called, is described in the legislation. The other is how the legislation deals with the issue of intellectual property. With regard to the former, the Board might wish to revisit the draft legislation after reviewing this report and making decisions about the nature of the Centre. With respect to the latter, it might want to ensure that the wording leaves enough flexibility for interaction with the Guyanese community on the compensation of individual, community and nation, as appropriate, for profits arising from the use of local biodiversity or other knowledge.

## 3. Previous IRFP Communications Activities

Communication activities undertaken so far under the program have been mentioned *en passant*. Up to the time of writing, a communications plan had not been prepared and implemented and the Program had not yet appointed any of the members of its management team. IRFP activities have been undertaken by staff members of the Guyana Natural Resources Agency in between other duties.

Despite this, we would like to acknowledge the fact that some communications activities have been carried out. Public sessions to provide information and answer questions about the Program have been held. These have included sessions with Amerindian communities near the Program site. Members of the Interim Board have participated in public fora both in Georgetown and on Amerindian settlements. Also, a video has been produced and is currently being reviewed to sharpen its focus and bring it more in line with the current public-information needs of the Program. And an information package - comprising a series of useful one- and two-page flyers collected in an attractive folder - has been released.

Perhaps, there was some justification in not pursuing an all-out public-information blitz before policies had been clearly determined, legal and personnel structures firmly established

and human and other resources put in place. However, the time has come when failure to take communications action could begin to have a significant impact.

#### 4. Who are the Communicators

##### a. Government of Guyana

Another irony of the Iwokrama communications situation is that the Government of Guyana needs to play both an active and a silent role as source or communicator. There are three messages, crucial in the communication process, which only the Government can effectively deliver. The first is that the new administration headed by President Cheddi Jagan, is fully behind the program. (If the message could be expanded, with Opposition co-operation, to indicate that Iwokrama will not be treated as a field of political contest, the Program would benefit even further.) The Government has already expressed that support at the highest level. However, we get the impression that, in some quarters, the message has not been clearly heard.

A second message, which must be communicated by the Government rather than by IRFP, relates to perceptions that the gift of Guyanese territory to the Program represents an excessive sacrifice of Guyanese patrimony.

The third message is that Guyanese sovereignty over the territory is not being abandoned and that the people of Guyana will retain a major role at all levels of decision-making with respect to the Program. This is important at various levels - for example as a way of disabusing the minds of concerned Amerindians of fears that their traditional access to the territory - for hunting, fishing, etc. - is being abandoned to decision by a non-Guyanese entity.

##### b. IECC

Apart from areas such as these, the Government needs to leave the process of communication to the Program itself. Just as the communications challenges facing certain sections of the forest industry could constitute "noise" in the IECC communication process, the communication challenges - credibility, perceptions of bias, etc. - which governments inevitably face could constitute a harmful distraction in Iwokrama's communication efforts. Even its educational work could be harmed if perceived to be tainted by political influence.

Also needing to be stressed is that the communication efforts of the IECC are too important to be left solely to the communications staff. In many cases, the work of communications professionals goes beyond planning and production and includes actual delivery. However, this is a shared responsibility. The head of IECC may recognize the need for contact with a head of Government - the President of Guyana, say. He or she may even make the arrangements. But the actual communicator in this case is likely to be the Director-General of even the Chairman of the Board. Similarly, IECC may help in the organization of an international academic encounter. Evidently, however, such an endeavour could only succeed if it is a collegial one with the Program's scientific staff taking a leading role.

## I. LOCAL RESOURCES

1. Local and Regional Production Capabilities

As with other Iwokrlama entities, IECC would be expected to use local production capabilities whenever these are capable of meeting the requirements for the preparation of material for local or foreign consumption, as the case may be. Unfortunately, we were unable to make a firm determination of that capability. However, it is believed that, in most cases, the production needs of the IECC, if not capable of being satisfied within the country, could be fulfilled within the Commonwealth Caribbean area.

2. Telecommunications Infrastructure

This aspect is addressed in Section III.

**J. THE STRUCTURE OF THE IECC**

1. Approach

The structure proposed here is based on the assumption that the approach recommended in this report would be accepted by the Board. This approach may be summarized as one that is based on proactivity rather than reaction, genuine dialogue, meaningful education, and the use of a wide range of appropriate media. It involves information, education communication activities rooted in meaningful and mutually rewarding linkages at the local, regional and international levels.

2. Sections or Units

The most efficient structure through which to give effect to the concepts and approaches outlined above would encompass the following units or sections:

- i) Information Systems [and Support] (SUBJECT, OF COURSE, TO PAT'S RECOMMENDATIONS; Barb's)
- ii) Development Support and Public Affairs: responsible for the normal public affairs or public relations type of activity as well as the development-support approach described in this report;
- iii) Education: responsible for collaborating with the research and other relevant sections of the Research and Training Centre to develop, establish and deliver the educational activities outlined in section (D) above;
- iv) Production and Media Resources: to facilitate the production, storage, delivery, etc of print, audio-visual and other material needed to facilitate (i) - (iii) above;
- v) Communications Research: to undertake the three levels of research described above which include communications research as a research

activity of the overall program as well as the two levels of research required to facilitate the development support approach and normal feedback functions respectively;

- vi) External Relations: concerned principally with executing the communications linkages, and assisting in other linkages, with foreign countries and institutions.

## 2. Head of Centre

Three things ought to be said about the position of head of the centre. First of all, the decision to locate the position of Communications Manager at the second level of management, with a direct report relationship to the Director-General, is to be applauded. This is consistent with the most enlightened approach to communications and symbolic of the salience of education and communication as aspects of Iwokrama's *raison d'être*.

Secondly, the dual role of the holder of that office needs to be recognized. As head of the centre, the incumbent has a role which is essentially outward looking and which, depending on the decisions taken regarding the "centre of excellence" idea, might relate no less to the work of other rain forest programs. On the other hand, he or she, as a head of department in the IRFP structure, is concerned with servicing the particular communication and information needs of the Program. The performance of the external role might be enhanced if the incumbent is designated both as Communications Manager of IRFP and Director of the IECC.

The job description of the Communications Manager should be reviewed once decisions are made about the kind of Centre to be established and the kind of approach it would adopt. If the concept proposed in this report is substantially accepted, the incumbent should, as far as possible, have the following attributes:

- \* University training, preferably at the graduate level, in a relevant discipline such as education, communications, journalism, the social sciences;
- \* A broad communications background, preferably with strong skills in one or more mass media area and sound knowledge of other areas of information, education and communications;
- \* Training and/or experience in communications planning, management and research;
- \* Training in social sciences or knowledge of DSC or experience in the use of communications tools in support of development, environmental, scientific or natural-resource activities;
- \* Training and/or experience in matters related to the environment or an awareness of environmental issues;
- \* Training and/or experience in international relations, international development or international communications and experience in working with persons of different cultural

## K. RESOURCES REQUIRED

### 1. Human Resources

The level of staffing required by the Centre, when operating at full strength, would depend on a number of factors which cannot easily be determined at this stage. Assuming the approval of the structure proposed at (J), the minimum requirement will be for a director and six heads of section. There will also be the need for additional professional staff in each section with the possible exception of Communications Research.

### 2. Accommodation

IECC would need a presence both on the Program site and at the Program's Georgetown accommodation. The agreed staff levels would provide some indication of the needed space. In addition, secure and otherwise appropriate provision would need to be made for the books, journals, computer equipment, etc. of the Information Systems Section and for the production equipment and outputs of the Production and Media Resources Section. Also, depending on decisions taken regarding public education/environmental literacy activities, one or two classrooms/interpretation centres would be required.

### 3 Ideas on Funding

#### (i) Short Term

During the first five to eight years, IECC will most likely have to depend entirely on international agencies to finance its program, administrative and other costs. During this period, a number of points would need to be borne in mind. The first is the idea that Iwokrama should not be seen to be competing with Guyana for international assistance.

The second point is that there is no need, and perhaps no reason, to seek funding from a single source. Funding for different elements of the Centre's work could be sought from different sources.

Thirdly, it must be admitted that a comprehensive survey of the likely attitude of aid donors was not undertaken, indeed was not possible in the time available. However, we believe that Canadian agencies should be among those contacted. Canada has an interest in supporting a Program that combines biodiversity with sustainable utilization because the point at which these two approaches meet is exactly the point at which the Canadian approach to forestry development meets that of many developing countries. There is considerable enthusiasm for Iwokrama in some sections of the Forestry Unit of the Department of Natural Resources. The attitude within CIDA seems a little more guarded. The CIDA position appears to be:

- a. a preference to support the National Forestry Action Plan than to provide major sums to Iwokrama and a conviction that Guyana's support for Iwokrama should not be given to the neglect of its own national plan;

b. a preparedness, however, to provide more or less modest sums for Iwokrama if the conditions at (a) are met and if funds are available - and this could include a reasonable amount to facilitate links between Iwokrama and the Canadian-sponsored international model forest network;

c. a preference to see Iwokrama supported by other Canadian agencies, such as IDRC, which are not already committed to the national forestry plan and, possibly, a willingness to help promote some of Iwokrama's fund-raising efforts in international agencies which receive Canadian funding.

It should be stressed that none of the CIDA officials we spoke to made any specific commitments with respect to IECC. However, we would not be surprised if these officials are attracted to the kinds of activities and relatively small sums involved, especially after evidence that Iwokrama's international structure is taking the burden off the Guyanese Public Service thereby freeing up resources to address the national plan.

(ii) Long Term

IECC will probably never be a self-sustaining entity. However, there are two ways in which it can build in an element of sustainability. One is by ensuring that the quality and relevance of its work are both consistently high and very well known and accepted. Having made some initial commitment of resources to the Centre, donors would look to its performance to provide the justification for continued support. Without getting into the enterprise of empire-building, some modest effort may be required to ensure that this performance is recognized in the appropriate places.

Secondly, wherever possible and appropriate, IECC should seek to recover some of its costs by being compensated for its products and services. This compensation might take the form of cash payments sometimes, of reciprocity (exchange of data bases, for example) in other cases.

## L. PLAN OF ACTION

The following steps constitute one path the Board may wish to take in moving from the present situation to the full establishment of the Centre. This schema takes account of the need to respond to immediate and ongoing communication challenges while proceeding with further planning and institutionalization.

### PRELIMINARY PHASE (Remainder of 1993)

a. Decisions

Board to decide on the acceptability of the approach, tentative programs, structure, resource requirements, etc. outlined in this report, including the "centre of excellence" idea. Board members should take of the extent to which they are treading a new path and therefore maintain an element of flexibility.

b. Immediate Tasks

In view of some immediate communication needs which have been recognized, efforts should be made either to recruit the Communications Manager (and Director-designate of the Centre) immediately. If it is not possible to identify immediately someone with the desired attributes, help should be acquired on a consultancy or short-term basis. In any case, action should begin early to take care of the immediate public affairs needs of the program, some of which are identified above.

YEAR 1 - First Half

c. Communications Manager/IECC Director

Should be in place as early as possible, certainly by the end of the half year. Needs to hit the ground running - taking care of immediate tasks while pursuing a brief period of local orientation (including, importantly, acquaintance with the Iwokrama environment) and brief international attachments. A highly competent Administrative Assistant, preferably with some acquaintance with the communications and/or environmental scene, should be appointed immediately.

d. Information Systems and Development-Support/Public Affairs

These would be the main areas for immediate activity. Funds permitting, steps should be taken to appoint the heads of the two sections, particularly IS, as soon as the Communications Manager, and the Director-General, have had time to settle down.

YEAR 1 - Second Half

e. Planning

Short-term (1/2 years) and medium-term (3-4 years) plans should be developed with the help of the ideas in this document insofar as these are accepted by the Board.

f. Fund-Raising

See ideas above.

g. Internal Communication

Discussion at senior management level on organizational profile. Action with respect to logo. Development, under guidance of Director-General, of orientation/sensitization program for all IRFP staff.

h. International Linkages

Action should be begin, in terms of data gathering and preliminary contacts, both from

a communications and information point of view.

## YEAR 2

### i. Research, Education, and Production and Media Resources

Heads of these sections to be appointed and begin work after brief orientation. (In the case of Media Resources and, to some extent, research, work would have started by Director and other staff in Year 1.)

### j. Equipment and Material

Equipment and material to facilitate the functioning of IS and Production Sections should be in place.

### k. Formal Launching

Formal launching of IECC as a semi-autonomous functioning within IRFP, reporting to the Director-General and continuing to serve the communication and information needs of the entire Program.

### l. Tours and Interpretation Centre(s)

Initial experiments with "eco-tours" and interpretation centre(s) - subject to the level of development of the IRFP.

## YEAR 3

### m. Tours and Interpretation Centre(s)

Full establishment of tours and interpretation centres, the level of development of IRFP permitting.

### n. Other Activities

Most other activities, including the establishment of the journal (if this is found to be necessary and feasible) and the external relations program should be on the way by now.

### o. Evaluation

A review and evaluation of the work of the Centre so far and of its institutionalization phase.



### M. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Board of Trustees should proceed confidently with the establishment of the International Environmental Communications Centre.
2. The mission of the IECC should be to help to advance the objectives of the overall program by providing information support; promoting environmental literacy, particularly with respect to rain forest utilization and conservation; establishing fruitful and linkages between IRFP and all relevant publics in Guyana and in other countries through the mutually beneficial sharing of information and ideas.
3. A more appropriate name should be selected - if possible from those proposed at Attachment 'D'.
4. In its communication work, the Centre should take the kind of holistic approach to its work which is facilitated by the use of the Development Support Communication (DSC) methodology. As part of this approach, all the audiences relevant to the success of the Iwokrama Program should be identified and studied in order to discover their potential contributions, their concerns and the most appropriate means for interacting with them. (The analysis done at (C) of Section II might provide a useful starting point.)
5. In the education program, as in the communication program per se, effectiveness, rather than mere quantity or quality of output, should be the main measure of success. The media used in the education program should include print; electronic; inter-personal; field trips, tours and tourism; exhibits and portable displays; schools (or "interpretation centres"); and teacher training and other media, such as special events, art and photography competitions, postcards etc. (See (D) (4) of section II.)
6. Decisions about the image and profile of the organization should not be left to chance but should be discussed as both a management and communications matter with implications for a range of actions and approaches. A suitable logo should be selected on the basis of an open competition.
7. IECC should go beyond servicing the needs of the Program and should seek to become an international centre of excellence in information, education and communication with respect to rain forest utilization and conservation.
8. The Centre should seek to establish meaningful local and international linkages and, where necessary, to support the linkages established by the overall Program.
9. Close attention should be paid to the intellectual property issue not merely in terms of its legal ramifications but as a potentially significant communications issue.
10. After making decisions about the overall approach to IECC, including its name, the Board should revisit the draft Bill and Agreement to ensure that its decisions are properly reflected both with respect to the functioning of the IECC and with regard to the

flexibility needed to respond to the evolution of ideas on intellectual property.

11. Note should be taken of the public-information activities so far carried out under the Program and of the fact that a more structured communications program is now required.

12. With respect to such matters as the exercise of sovereignty over the Program site, the proper source or communicator is the Government of Guyana.

13. With respect to other matters, IRFP should be seen to be the sole communicator. However, a collegial approach should be adopted with the role of the professional communicators within IECC and that of colleagues in the rest of IRFP being recognized, defined and respected.

14. Wherever possible, local or regional resources should be utilized to fulfil the needs of the Centre.

15. It is proposed that the Centre be divided into two services. One would deal with Information, the other with Public Education and Communication Support. Each will have its own head. The public education and communication services provided by IECC would be as follows:

- development support and public affairs, including international linkages;
- education;
- production and media resources; and
- communications research.

16. The human resource requirement of IECC during the first four years will be as follows:

	<u>YEAR 1</u>		<u>YEAR 2</u>		<u>YEAR 3</u>		<u>YEAR 4</u>	
	Prof Support		Prof Supp.		Prof Supp.		Prof Supp	
Director	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Information	SEE SECTION III RECOMMENDATIONS							
Comm/Educ	1	1	3	2	6	7	9	9

In addition to the holders of these positions, consultants and contractors would need to be utilized to fulfil specific tasks.

17. IECC will need to be provided with accommodation both on-site at Iwokrama and at the Program's location on the coastland.

18. The Plan of Action outlined at (L) should be used as the basis for efforts towards the



establishment of the IECC.

19. A detailed budget would need to be established for the Centre.

20. Funding should be sought from a variety of sources rather than from a single source. In this regard, note and advantage should be taken of Canadian goodwill towards the Program and towards the approach to forestry development which it implies.